

REINSPECTION REPORT

QUBE Qualifications and Development Ltd Reinspection

25 November 2005



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**)

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

REINSPECTION REPORT

QUBE Qualifications and Development Ltd Reinspection

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the reinspection	2
Overall judgement	2
Grades	4
Key findings	4

Detailed reinspection findings

Leadership and management	8
Equality of opportunity	9
Quality assurance	10
Business administration, management & professional	11
Retailing, customer service & transportation	14
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	17

REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Qube Qualifications and Development Limited (QQD) is a private limited company and a division of the Qube Group. The company was originally known as Qube Hospitality when it was established in Enfield in 1999. It has expanded in the last six years and was renamed when it relocated its head office operations to Henley-on-Thames in July 2002. QQD's operations team has an office in Lutterworth, Leicestershire. The company contracts with the National Employer Service and London Central Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide work-based learning for young people and adults. It also provides training for employed adults leading to national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 2 through the employer training pilot (ETP) scheme. This training is contracted through Manchester LSC, Essex LSC and Leicester LSC. Since the previous inspection, QQD provides training for 36 learners in literacy, numeracy and key skills. These programmes are new and were not reviewed as part of this reinspection.

2. QQD works closely with a number of national and regional employers throughout the North, the Midlands and the South. All learners are employed before starting on their programmes and most training takes place in the workplace. Some training, particularly for technical certificates for apprentices, is carried out by QQD's staff or subcontractors. Assessments and additional support are provided in the workplace.

3. Following the previous inspection, QQD has redefined its management structure. QQD is led and managed by the managing director who is supported by the director of learning and director of strategy and commerce. The company has a team of programme sector managers, team managers and learning advisers who are supported by a small team of administrators. Thirty qualified assessors, some of whom are internal verifiers, support and assess learners in the workplace.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Business administration, management & professional

4. There are 25 learners on business administration and management programmes. There are 10 learners following apprenticeships in business administration and five learners on ETP business administration level 2. There are 10 adult learners, and of these, two are working towards a business administration NVQ at level 3, three are working towards an NVQ at level 2, and five are on a management NVQ at level 3. In addition to their induction to work, learners have an induction in to QQD and their qualification. This is carried out by a QQD learning adviser in the workplace and includes health and safety and equality of opportunity. Learners work in a range of organisations including hotels, financial institutions, a supermarket distribution centre and office service providers. Learning advisers support the learners in the workplace through action-planning, progress review meetings and assessments. Each learner is usually visited every three weeks.

Retailing, customer service & transportation

5. There are 111 learners on retailing and customer service programmes. In customer service there are 63 apprentices, 22 advanced apprentices and 23 learners following ETP programmes. In retailing there are two advanced apprentices and one learner working towards a warehousing apprenticeship. All learners are employed in large national companies. Learners are visited approximately every two to three weeks in the workplace by learning advisers from QQD who provide individual support and assessment. Job-related skills training is given by the learner's employer.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

6. There are 318 learners taking a wide range of hospitality and catering qualifications. Programmes include food preparation and cooking, food and drink service, bar service, housekeeping, and hospitality supervision. There are 58 advanced apprentices, 139 apprentices and 121 ETP learners on the NVQ at level 2. All learners are employed full-time. Most of the advanced apprentices are working towards hospitality supervision at level 3. QQD has 14 full-time hospitality learning advisers and three part-time assessors. In addition to this, three specialist full-time staff are employed to give additional support in literacy and numeracy. All training is carried out on the job except for technical certificates. Courses leading towards technical certificates are held off-the-job at suitable venues around the country.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	7
Number of inspection days	35
Number of learners interviewed	53
Number of staff interviewed	38
Number of employers interviewed	18
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	36

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

7. The previous inspection in September 2004 found that the provision was unsatisfactory in retailing, customer service and transportation and hospitality, sport, leisure and travel. QQD's leadership and management and its arrangements for quality assurance were also unsatisfactory. Its arrangements for equality of opportunity were very weak. The provision for business administration, management and professional was satisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process all aspects of the provision were judged to be satisfactory or better.

GRADES

grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

Grades awarded at previous inspection

Leadership and management		4
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		5
Quality assurance		4

Business administration, management & professional		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Business administration		
- Other government-funded provision	89	3
- Apprenticeships for young people	4	None
Management		
- Other government-funded provision	46	3
- Apprenticeships for young people	21	3

Retailing, customer service & transportation		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Retailing		
- Apprenticeships for young people	40	4
- Other government-funded provision	2	4
Customer service		
- Apprenticeships for young people	143	4
- Other government-funded provision	36	4
Warehousing and distribution		
- Other government-funded provision	1	None

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hospitality and catering		
- Apprenticeships for young people	492	4
- Other government-funded provision	62	4

Grades awarded at reinspection

Leadership and management		3
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality assurance		3

Business administration, management & professional		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Business administration		
- Apprenticeships for young people	17	3
- Employer training pilot	5	None
Management		
- Apprenticeships for young people	3	None

Retailing, customer service & transportation		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Customer service		
- Apprenticeships for young people	88	3
- Employer training pilot	23	3

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hospitality and catering		
- Apprenticeships for young people	197	3
- Employer training pilot	121	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

8. **Retention rates for learners in all areas have improved since the previous inspection** and are generally satisfactory. However, achievements on apprenticeships in hospitality and catering are slow, although there are signs of improvement to achievements of NVQs and key skills.

9. Most learners in business administration and management are now making satisfactory progress, although some are still making slow progress. This was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection.

10. The standard of learners' work has been maintained and is satisfactory in customer service and hospitality and catering. The standard of learners' practical and personal skills in business administration and management is good.

Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	0	3	0	3
Total	0	0	3	0	3

11. **Learners across all areas of learning receive particularly good support.** This was identified as a strength in two areas at the previous inspection and is now a strength in customer service. Pastoral support is good across all areas.

12. Employer engagement is satisfactory in most areas. **Learners in business administration and management work have good workplace experiences.** Most employers are supportive and encourage their learners. In customer service, most learners are given paid time off to study.

13. Induction is satisfactory across all areas and has improved since the previous inspection. **There is good coverage of health and safety and equality of opportunity at induction.** Initial assessment is adequate in all areas and incorporates a learning style questionnaire. However, inadequate use is made of the results of this.

14. **Assessments and verification are generally thorough and well planned across all areas.** Clear records are kept of assessments and prompt actions are taken if problems are identified at verification.

15. Satisfactory support is given to learners who have additional learning needs in literacy and numeracy. This has improved since the previous inspection. QGD's staff are generally well trained and the company has employed three well-qualified staff to lead this area.

16. **The use of learning materials is good in some areas of the country,** although some of the support staff do not use the materials effectively. The learning resources are inadequate in business administration and management.

17. **Reviews are ineffective in business administration and management and hospitality and catering.** Most learners and employers find reviews confusing with little difference between a review and an assessment visit. There is insufficient focus on learning in some reviews.

Leadership and management

18. **Good professional development is available for staff.** Staff now regularly receive accurate data and are set clear targets for their programme area. There is a wide range of training opportunities for staff to improve their skills and knowledge, with particularly good training in equality and diversity.

19. **Internal communications are effective.** QQD has restructured the organisation and staff now have clear roles and responsibilities. The introduction of formal meetings across all areas of learning has greatly improved the sharing of good practice.

20. **There is good promotion of equality and diversity to staff, learners and employers.** This has been a particular focus for improvement following the previous inspection. Staff training is thorough and learners now receive regular reinforcement of equality and diversity. The introduction of an equality and diversity champion has improved the provision.

21. Staff appraisal is satisfactory and there are clear procedures for appraisal which are linked to QQD's business plan. There is inadequate focus on learning in reviews and learning plans.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good development of staff to benefit learners
- effective strategies to reinforce equality and diversity

Weaknesses

- insufficient focus on managing some aspects of the learning process

Business administration, management & professional

Business administration

Strengths

- good development of personal and practical skills
- particularly good workplace experiences

Weaknesses

- ineffective review process
- inadequate resources to support independent learning

Management

Strengths

- good development of personal and practical skills
- particularly good workplace experiences

Weaknesses

- ineffective review process
- inadequate resources to support independent learning

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Customer service

Strengths

- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- slow progress for some learners

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality and catering

Strengths

- good support for learners
- effective reinforcement of equality and diversity

Weaknesses

- slow framework completion by apprentices
- insufficient planning and reviewing of learning for some learners

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDING

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- good development of staff to benefit learners
- effective strategies to reinforce equality and diversity

Weaknesses

- insufficient focus on managing some aspects of the learning process

22. Staff development is good. Since the previous inspection, the staff structure has been reorganised and, although improvements have been slow to get underway, staff are now well deployed and keen to embrace new ways of working. Managers clearly identify the potential of staff and develop them effectively. Enthusiastic staff are now employed as equality and diversity and health and safety champions and other staff have been effectively trained to become specialists in literacy and numeracy. These staff have successfully presented training programmes for other staff to raise awareness and improve skills. Health and safety monitoring of employers is thorough and is carried out by well-qualified staff. A review of senior staff roles and responsibilities has been successful in creating clearer lines of communication. Staff appreciate these clearer communication links and have better accountability. Improvements to the staff appraisal process have been effective in identifying training and development needs and improving the identification and setting of clearer performance targets. Regular staff meetings across sectors are now held with a clear focus on improving retention and achievement rates. Monthly meetings between staff and their line manager are working particularly well as a process for improving performance. Clearly recorded action plans are produced at these meetings. A good range of staff development opportunities is available and staff gain relevant qualifications. Most learning advisers are taking key skills qualifications and a professional trainer course is being piloted with some staff, with a view to offering it to all. The use of information and communications technology has improved since the previous inspection and most learning advisers now use laptop computers to help improve the learning process. The company has recently been reaccredited with the Investors in People standard, a standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people.

23. Teamwork and external communication with employers have improved since the previous inspection, especially through the involvement of the ETP programmes. There is particularly good and effective communication with employers at a senior level, although engagement with work-based supervisors and managers is sometimes less effective. Employers' involvement in reviews is good in some establishments but less so in others. Working relationships between QQD's staff and managers are generally very positive. Since the previous inspection, all employers now receive a useful handbook

QUBE QUALIFICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT LTD REINSPECTION

which includes information on the programme, health and safety and equality and diversity. However, there is insufficient information about the role of the employer and the importance of their involvement in identifying learning needs and planning learning.

24. The use of management information has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Staff are now much clearer about the information that they need and how they can use it. Data is now more reliable and is used effectively in individual staff meetings and appraisals to set and monitor targets. Retention and achievement targets set in hospitality and catering are challenging and realistic, although targets set for staff in customer service are too low. Data on the progress of individual learners is clear and a newly introduced procedure is in place to identify learners who are at risk of leaving early and those who will achieve on time. It is too early to see if this is effective.

25. The provision for literacy and numeracy support is satisfactory. There are currently over 80 learners receiving literacy and numeracy skills support, most of whom are in the hospitality sector. Most employers keenly support initiatives to give additional help to learners with literacy and numeracy needs, although a few do not see the benefits. The company has plans to introduce support for learners who need help with English for speakers of other languages but this is not available at present. Resourcing of this area has improved significantly since the previous inspection. QQD has three staff who specialise in literacy and numeracy. They have a good understanding of the needs of employed learners and a strong commitment to the skills for life agenda. Skills for life is the government's strategy for training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. Learners' literacy and numeracy needs are clearly identified at induction and their learning is planned using information from diagnostic assessments. Literacy and numeracy support takes place in the workplace in small groups or individually. The achievement rates are satisfactory, especially in key skills tests. Some good contextualised materials are used, although literacy and numeracy is not yet fully established into vocational programmes.

26. QQD does not focus sufficiently on managing the learning process. Induction materials for learners are almost entirely focused on assessment, and the employer handbook lists 13 different assessment methods but makes no mention of learning. Individual learning plans do not provide sufficient information on what vocational skills will be learnt during the programme. There is insufficient focus on planning and reviewing learning during progress reviews. Although QQD has introduced the use of diagnostic tests to identify individual learning styles, the results of these are not effectively used. The quality and use of learning materials varies. Some learners have good access to materials for study, but others have insufficient access. Some employers and learning advisers provide suitable materials, while others do not.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

27. QQD has good strategies to reinforce the understanding of equality and diversity by staff and learners. QQD recognises the importance of ensuring learners, employers and staff have a clear understanding of these subjects. Learners are given useful leaflets covering topics such as equal pay, disability, race and culture. They are then asked

questions on each leaflet. This approach works particularly well in some areas of the country where learners are given the leaflets at each visit to reinforce learning. It is less effective where learners are given all the leaflets at the beginning of their programme. Learners are also encouraged to take key skills assignments on equality and diversity topics which they find particularly interesting. Staff receive a clearly written booklet about equality and diversity at induction and take a test which they have to pass. QQD is currently developing a bespoke course for staff, which will be accredited. An equality and diversity champion has been appointed, and an equality and diversity committee has been developed and the members meet every month. The organisation is planning further initiatives and improvements, including the production of a learning activity booklet about culture, religion and diet. Equality and diversity data is analysed thoroughly and the results are used to make management decisions.

28. The complaints procedure is used effectively and prompt actions are taken if a complaint is made. Most learners are aware of their right to complain and the process they would use. QQD's equality and diversity policy is poorly written. The policy contains confusing references to the Human Rights Act 1998, employment legislation and anti-stalking laws, and there is inadequate explanation of the key responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

29. Since the previous inspection, QQD has made significant progress in the introduction of clear and thorough quality assurance arrangements. The quality system evaluates all key processes and a well-planned quality assurance timetable is in place. A member of staff has been given clear responsibility for quality assurance and this role has helped to promote the importance of quality assurance and to improve key processes. However, some new procedures are not yet fully working and there are still some inconsistent practices.

30. Following the previous inspection, QQD is now collecting and analysing feedback from learners, staff and employers and improvements have started to be made. Key processes such as induction, training delivery, reviews and assessment are carefully observed and staff are given useful feedback to help improve. However, there is insufficient emphasis on learning in these observations.

31. There is clear action and development planning, and actions are carefully followed up. Internal verification is thorough and has been further improved since the previous inspection. External verifier reports are positive. All internal and external verification reports are thoroughly scrutinised by a senior manager. There is a good awareness of the benefits of sharing best practice. Much of this takes place informally, although a programme of regular, well-structured meetings also helps this process. The self-assessment process is inclusive and there are many accurate judgements, although some strengths were overstated.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Business administration, management & professional

Business administration, management & professional		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Business administration		
- Apprenticeships for young people	17	3
- Employer training pilot	5	None
Management		
- Apprenticeships for young people	3	None

Business administration

Strengths

- good development of personal and practical skills
- particularly good workplace experiences

Weaknesses

- ineffective review process
- inadequate resources to support independent learning

Management

Strengths

- good development of personal and practical skills
- particularly good workplace experiences

Weaknesses

- ineffective review process
- inadequate resources to support independent learning

Achievement and standards

32. Achievements are satisfactory across the range of business administration and management apprenticeship programmes, although some learners are making slow progress. Achievement on ETP programmes is also satisfactory. In 2003-04, over half of those who started achieved their qualification. Achievements on apprenticeship programmes are generally improving. There are eight learners currently on the management apprenticeship who are now making steady progress. Of the five apprentices who started the business administration programme in the past year, all left early without completing the framework, although all achieved their NVQ.

33. Learners develop good practical and personal skills. This has improved since the previous inspection. They develop good communication skills and have increased their confidence and self-esteem since starting the programme. Some learners are gaining good management expertise and project co-ordination skills. One learner is efficiently co-ordinating banqueting staff in a hotel. Employers have identified an increased level of proficiency in the learners' work. Some employers have indicated that learners have developed improved team building skills and maturity in their roles. Learners are proud of their progress and eager to talk about their achievements. They are enthusiastic and self-motivated. Learners' portfolios are well organised and neatly presented. The standard of learners' practical work is good and most are making satisfactory progress.

Quality of education and training

34. Learners have a particularly good workplace experience. Learners gain a wide variety of experiences in their workplaces and employers are supportive. It was identified that employers gave good support during the previous inspection. In the larger organisations, learners are able to practise their skills in a wide range of contexts in different departments. Learners who work in smaller businesses are able to apply their practical skills in a range of diverse roles. For example, one learner is involved in marketing and managing a project to support a promotional event. The learner is efficiently designing and creating artwork, sourcing and liaising with suppliers, and project managing activities through to completion. Some employers have altered learners' job roles to allow the learners to gain additional experience for their qualification. All employers are committed to staff development and are keen to see learners progress. Employers take a genuine interest in the learners' development and QQD staff have good working relationships with learners and employers. Some learners are given a high degree of responsibility within their organisation to help them gain additional management experiences. For example, one learner who is based in a small business is managing particularly complex projects and in the absence of the employer, takes over the day-to-day running of the organisation. Most employers offer additional occupational training to learners through in-house workshops or training programmes.

35. Assessment and verification are satisfactory and clear records are kept. This has been maintained since the previous inspection. Induction is also satisfactory and learners receive adequate initial advice and guidance. The range of qualifications offered is satisfactory and appropriate for the needs of the learners. Learners appreciate the support from their assessors which is enabling them to gain a qualification while developing new skills and extending their understanding of their job. There are adequate arrangements for key skills and technical certificate delivery which takes place in the learner's workplace. Learners who have additional learning needs receive good, discreet support from suitably qualified support staff. Staff are adequately qualified with satisfactory experience of the industry.

36. Reviews are ineffective and have deteriorated since the previous inspection. Employers are not always involved in the reviews and often have to rely on the informal communication they have with their learner and QQD staff. Employers are not provided

QUBE QUALIFICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT LTD REINSPECTION

with a written copy of the progress review reports which identify the learners' progress or targets set. Progress reviews take place regularly every eight weeks, and learning advisers generally visit their learners every three to four weeks to identify interim action plans and give support. However, a small number of learners have not been visited for some time and one learner who is making slow progress, has only received two visits in the past four months. Most learners are confused about the aim of a review and the purpose of interim visits.

37. There are inadequate resources to support independent learning. This was not identified as a key issue during the previous inspection. Most learners have poor access to learning materials unless they are provided by their employer. QQD does not provide learners with reading or other learning materials to help them develop their background knowledge of business or management topics. This does not allow the learner to work independently between assessor visits and to explore issues relevant to their qualification in a wider context. Although QQD staff are provided with a list of suggested resources, these are not always given to the learner as points of reference.

Leadership and management

38. Communication between senior managers and staff is good. There are regular staff meetings and training workshops to allow learning advisers to share good practice, have meaningful discussions and to update their programme knowledge. Staff receive good support for personal and professional development and have access to a wide range of training opportunities. All staff have received recent equality and diversity training and updating. Appraisals for full-time and contracted assessors are carried out regularly, and are thorough. All staff contribute to the self-assessment process and have a clear understanding of the areas for improvement.

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Retailing, customer service & transportation		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Customer service		
- Apprenticeships for young people	88	3
- Employer training pilot	23	3

Customer service

Strengths

- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- slow progress for some learners

Achievement and standards

39. Since the previous inspection, retention and achievement rates have improved steadily across all programmes and are now satisfactory. Retention on the customer service apprenticeship programme has increased from 30 per cent in 2002-03 to 82 per cent in 2004-05. Retention for advanced apprentices has increased from 32 per cent to 70 per cent in the same period. All of the adult learners who started in the current year are still on programme. Achievement rates on the ETP programme are good in the current year. Fifty-three per cent of learners have already achieved their qualification. Most learners make satisfactory progress towards achievement of their qualification, although a few are making slower progress and continue beyond their planned target dates. Some learners progress to higher qualifications and many progress from level 2 to level 3.

40. Most learners gain confidence and develop a good range of customer service skills during their training. This has been maintained following the previous inspection. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of their employment rights and responsibilities. Some learners take on increasingly responsible job roles, applying their improved occupational skills in the workplace. Some learners have jobs that include supervisory responsibility and they take on additional management duties competently. Evidence from some ETP programmes has been used effectively towards NVQs.

Quality of education and training

41. The learning and pastoral support is good for learners. Learning advisers visit learners in the workplace frequently and visits are clearly recorded. Visits are effectively arranged to meet the needs of the learners and employers and often take place in the

QUBE QUALIFICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT LTD REINSPECTION

evening or at weekends, if appropriate. Visits are usually every two or three weeks. In between visits, learners have good access to QQD's staff through e-mail or mobile telephone. Learners appreciate the support they receive. Learning advisers make good use of laptop computers for assessment and learning sessions and learners have good access to learning support materials. Most learning advisers effectively use a clearly written scheme of work for each programme, although some do not always refer to this.

42. Progress reviews are satisfactory and are carried out regularly every eight weeks. They are clearly recorded, although some employers are not fully involved. This was identified at the previous inspection. Employers are not left with a copy of the review paperwork and are not always aware of the learners' targets. Most employers encourage and support learners in the workplace. Most learners are given time off to work on their portfolios and some are given the opportunity to use computers at work. One learner was paid to come into work and complete portfolio work for the programme.

43. Induction and initial assessment for learners is still satisfactory. Induction includes a learning style questionnaire and thorough coverage of equality and diversity, health and safety, assessment practice and evidence requirements. However, there is inadequate focus on learning. The results from the learning style questionnaire are not always given to learners and the results are not routinely used to enhance the learning process. The clearly written induction pack is left with learners and employers for further reference. On some occasions the employer has been effectively involved in the induction. Individual learning plans are completed appropriately, although some contain long-term targets that are inappropriate and do not take account of learners' prior experiences. Assessments and internal verification are satisfactory and portfolios are well referenced with some good use of witness testimonies, photographs, case studies and product evidence.

44. Support for literacy and numeracy is adequate and this was highlighted at the previous inspection. Learning advisers give effective individual support in the workplace. Some learners are more motivated and confident in the workplace after improving their literacy and numeracy skills. Learning support staff are working towards qualifications in basic skills and learner support to enable them to improve the support for learners.

45. Some of the learners on customer service programmes make slow progress. Most learners were identified as making satisfactory progress at the previous inspection. Assessments are not regular for some learners and changes in staff have meant disruptions. Some learners have not been fully informed of changes and have found having several assessors confusing. A small number of learners have been without an assessor for several months and no assessment has taken place in this time. Evidence for key skills is not always clearly identified early in the programme and key skills assessment is not planned to take place for several months for some learners. Some learners have a poor understanding of evidence requirements and do not collect evidence from the workplace. Learners are not always sure how the evidence relates to their qualifications and save it for the assessor to reference.

Leadership and management

46. The management of learning programmes has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Strategies are in place to ensure managers are more aware of individual progress, although this is not fully effective across the provision. Management information is more consistent and accurate, and now more effectively used to help with management decisions. There is a clear process to identify learners who are at risk of leaving their programme early and this is beginning to be effective. Team meetings are held every month to keep learning advisers well informed of current practices and feedback on internal verification and awarding body monitoring.

47. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory and has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Learning advisers have a clear understanding of equality and diversity. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and all staff have been involved in the development of the report through consultation and questionnaires. Questionnaires are also regularly sent to employers and learners and the results have been included in the self-assessment report. The report is generally well written and has identified the areas for improvement.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hospitality and catering		
- Apprenticeships for young people	197	3
- Employer training pilot	121	3

Hospitality and catering

Strengths

- good support for learners
- effective reinforcement of equality and diversity

Weaknesses

- slow framework completion by apprentices
- insufficient planning and reviewing of learning for some learners

Achievement and standards

48. Apprentices make slow progress towards completion of the framework. Retention and achievement rates were poor for apprentices at the previous inspection. Retention has now improved and learners are starting to progress well with their NVQ and key skills. Technical certificates are left until late in the programme. Achievements on ETP programmes are satisfactory with an achievement rate of 42 per cent during the past year and a retention rate of 60 per cent, with some learners still left to complete. Changes to the recruitment procedures have been made to improve the retention rates and there are early signs that these have been successful.

49. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory and most learners have a good knowledge of the industry. This has been maintained since the previous inspection. Learners on food preparation programmes demonstrate good knowledge of food products and recipes. Learners in bar work also have good product knowledge and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Quality of education and training

50. Learners receive good personal and learning support from QQD's staff. This was identified as a strength at the previous inspection. There is good support for literacy and numeracy for learners who need it. Practical support, advice and encouragement is available for learners who are experiencing personal difficulties. All learners interviewed during inspection described how the support provided enabled them to improve their commitment to the programme. Visits to learners in the workplace are regular and

productive. Assessment visits are arranged conveniently around the industry requirements and often take place at weekends, evenings and early mornings when deliveries take place. Learners have good access to learning advisers outside these visits, through e-mail or telephone. Good use is made of learning support materials by most learning advisers, although some do use support materials as well.

51. Equality and diversity is effectively promoted and has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Learners are now fully aware of equality and diversity issues. Some learners are able to cite examples of equality and diversity problems that they have coped with. For example, one learner explained that awareness of ethnicity issues helped her to deal with inappropriate behaviour of a customer towards another customer. Learners on ETP programmes within the schools meals service are better able to meet the dietary and cultural needs of children. Clearly written equality and diversity leaflets are used to help reinforce learning and are used well by most of QQD's staff. However, some of the learning advisers do not use these effectively during each visit.

52. Assessments are mostly satisfactory, as identified at the previous inspection. However, in one case the assessment was poorly planned and questions were insufficient to assess the learner's competence. Internal verification is generally satisfactory and actions are followed up promptly. Induction is satisfactory and covers subjects such as equality and diversity well, although there is insufficient focus on learning and too much focus on assessments.

53. Learning plans do not always take sufficient account of learners' prior experiences or knowledge and long-term targets for unit achievements are often inadequate. This was partially identified at the previous inspection. The planned duration for completion of the framework is unrealistic for some learners. Reviews are poorly recorded in most cases and learners and employers are not always clear about the difference between a review and other visits. Targets set at reviews do not focus on learning and do not sufficiently target what is required of the learner during the following eight weeks.

Leadership and management

54. The hospitality team receives good support from team leader and senior managers, and communication has improved considerably. Internal communication is now effective and has helped to improve the quality of provision. Staff development days are arranged once a month and include health and safety, quality assurance and learner support training. Staff appraisals are thorough, and consist of monthly performance reviews, three-monthly reviews and an annual full appraisal which clearly identifies training and development needs. Personal professional development is well supported and planned.

55. Employer involvement is satisfactory and is good at strategic levels with senior staff in large organisations. Most of the employers and supervisors support their employees well and encourage learning. Many employers provide a good range of additional training and qualifications such as dietary needs for the elderly, fire safety and health and

QUBE QUALIFICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT LTD REINSPECTION

safety at work. Employers, staff and learners are fully involved in the self-assessment process. The report clearly identified most of the key strengths and weaknesses found during the reinspection process. The self-assessment process has improved since the previous inspection.